

KILLER DUST VICTIM LEAVES GIFT OF HOPE

THE courage and spirit of a Glasgow nurse who died from a crippling asbestos disease will be remembered this week.

Williamina Watkins lost her battle with mesothelioma in March – 15 years after she watched her husband die from asbestosis.

But her remarkable story had a moving effect on everyone who knew her.

Now the group which helped her take her case for compensation to the courts – Clydeside Action on Asbestos – is setting up a group specially for women.

Williamina died before her case got to the courts but she had been determined to fight for justice.

By MAGGIE BARRY

One of her last wishes had been to contact other women in the same situation as herself.

For Williamina's case highlighted the women who may have come into contact with asbestos by washing husband's clothes, taking care of brothers' overalls or helping Dad get rid of the white dust.

After her story was published in the Evening Times many more women contacted CAA.

Until then the accepted wisdom had been that only men who worked with or near asbestos could be affected.

But Williamina had never worked near asbestos in her life. She caught it, she said, from dust on her husband's clothes.

And she would have been one of the

first at the new women's group meetings.

For Williamina it is too late. But it is not too late for the scores of other women who think they might be affected too.

Some of them may have come into contact with asbestos during the war and post war years when they took over the men's jobs.

And others, such as Williamina, may have contracted the condition from caring for work clothes.

The first meeting of the Women's Group takes place at 2pm tomorrow in 15 St Margaret's Place near Glasgow's Saltmarket.

"Mrs Watkins was a remarkable woman and if her story inspires any woman to come along tomorrow then she will not have died in vain," said CAA secretary John Docherty.



WILLIAMINA WATKINS. . . an inspiration

No sign of drugs on driver

THE driver of the train in London's Cannon Street rail crash showed no sign of being under the influence of drugs, a coroner's inquest heard today.

Driver Morris Graham was found to have trace of cannabis in his body although it was impossible to say whether he had used the drug before the accident, when the 7.58am train from Sevenoaks, Kent, hit the buffers on platform three on January 10, leaving two dead and 572 injured.

However, British Rail staff manager William Bassett who spoke to him on the morning of the accident said today at the City Coroners' Court there was nothing in his demeanour to suggest he was under the influence of any kind of substance.